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THE PROGRESS OF HOME DEMONSTRATION WORK

A radio talk by Dr. C. B. Smith, Chief, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., delivered from the Washington studios of the National Broadcasting Company and through 36 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Saturday, November 9, 1929.

There is a new leaven at work in rural home life. It has been gradually developing during the past fifteen years. It is designed to lighten the tasks and make easier the labor of farm women, add beauty and contentment to the rural home, quicken rural social life, bring to the farm family a measure of recreation, give guidance in the technique of home making, help the farm woman increase her income, add to her knowledge, and broaden her vision.

This new leaven is the home economic extension work, supported financially by the Federal Department of Agriculture, the State agricultural colleges, and the counties, and is carried on by the farm women themselves, aided by what are known as home demonstration agents. Over \$4,000,000 are being expended annually for this home economic work, of which nearly three and one-half million dollars are spent for the employment of home demonstration agents. There are now about 1,300 of these agents working in every State and Territory in the Union. They are located in counties in the rural districts, usually at the county seat. These home demonstration agents are usually farm-raised women who have taken a four-year course at some good college, are sympathetic with agriculture and rural life, and have had four or five years' experience in teaching or home work after graduating.

The things home demonstration agents may do and are doing to help the farm women in making a home are many. Among them are these:

She is helping the farm woman with her poultry, dairy, garden, and marketing problems, so that she may have more money with which to buy the things she needs--things for the house, things for the children, things for herself.

She is bringing to the farm woman's attention labor-saving devices and short-cut methods in doing housework, so that she may have more leisure to read, enjoy her children, work with her flowers, visit her neighbors, go to town, or do like things.

Home demonstration agents bring to the farm woman's attention information regarding the blending of colors, harmony in design, the use and making of patterns, the quality of textile and fabrics, so that the farm woman may clothe herself becomingly and in accordance with the fashions of the time.

They help the farm woman work with her problems of child training, to a knowledge of the child mind at various stages of development, child habits at different ages, the nutrition and growth of the child, so that it may be normal in mind and body.

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Home demonstration agents help the farm woman find the time and have the desire to join her neighbors in the upbuilding of community affairs and to do her full share. The mind and heart expand with worth-while and altruistic enterprises.

Home Demonstration Agents teach the farm women the need and value of play and social life. She is a better wife and mother who gets outside the home occasionally to see how other folks live and do, and who retains her youth with play and social life.

The home demonstration agent helps the farm woman to a better knowledge of nutrition. It is said that a third of our rural people are suffering from preventable ailments like constipation, anemia, rheumatism, goiter, headaches, indigestion, and pellagra, because of the improper selection, preparation, and use of the foods which are so abundant on the farm.

The home demonstration agent aids the farm woman to a knowledge of home decoration, the beauty of pictures, the choice and arrangement of furnishings, painting of china, the making of rugs and baskets, the landscaping of the home grounds, the arrangement of flowers, and like matters.

The home demonstration agent encourages the farm woman to go and show her how she may attend the women's extension camp, take a short course of a week or more at the agricultural college, where the mind is freed and the vision expanded, as a result of which she becomes increasingly interesting and companionable to her husband and children.

And in it all the farm woman herself, through the 30,000 rural home demonstration clubs she has organized, the 350,000 demonstrations she puts on yearly, the million farm women who take part, is contributing by far the largest part to this new movement, the final results of which must be to make rural life the ideal life, the sought-after life, the envied life in America.